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Testimony by:

Jill Fritz

In Opposition to:

SB 122, SB 123, HB 4212, & HB 4213

Committee:

House Agriculture Committee

Date:

February 15, 2011

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the nation's largest animal protection organization with over 11 million members and constituents, including more than 370,000 in Michigan, opposes SB 122, SB 123, HB 4212, & HB 4213.

Currently, nearly 10 billion land animals are raised for meat, eggs, and milk annually in the United States, typically warehoused by the tens if not hundreds of thousands in industrialized production facilities known as factory farms. A major focus of our work is education about the plight of animals in these facilities, and the environmental hazards that these facilities create. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that confined farm animals generate more than 450 million tonnes of manure annually, three times more raw waste than generated by Americans. Factory farms often spread waste on the ground untreated — contaminating our water, soil and air.

We commend the encouragement of all Michigan farmers to participate in MAEAP to promote environmental stewardship. However, we believe the passage of this legislation is not a step in the right direction because it essentially gives livestock farmers permission to continue polluting.

The HSUS recommends that MAEAP's livestock component be improved so that farms that are verified in MAEAP can be confident that following MAEAP guidelines will help them meet and even exceed minimum legal standards for pollution control.

In the meantime, though, we oppose the passage of this legislation because it will do little to address the serious problem of the pollution of Michigan's environment by large-scale animal agricultural production.

Jill Fritz

Michigan State Director

(517) 515-3839

jfritz@humanesociety.org